

inter act



nov 2008



the closure issue

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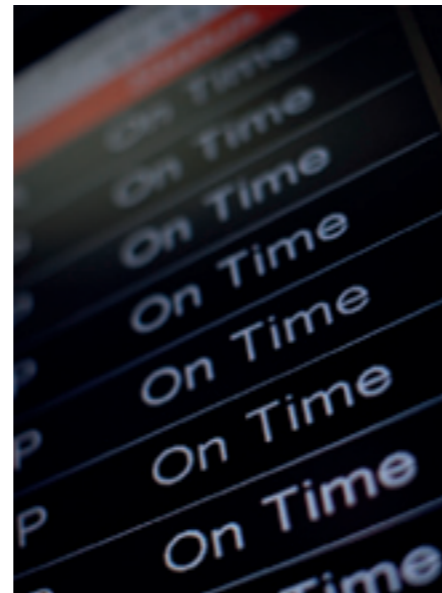
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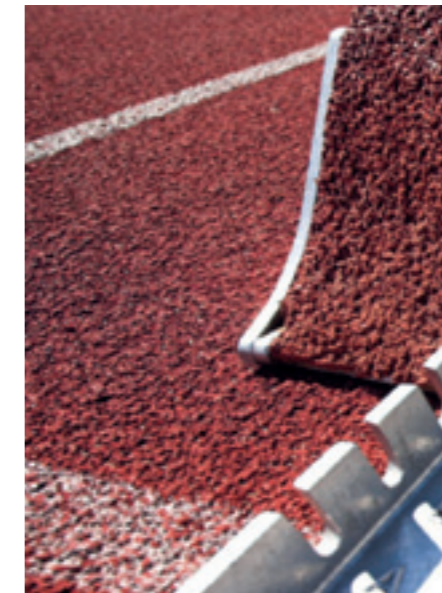
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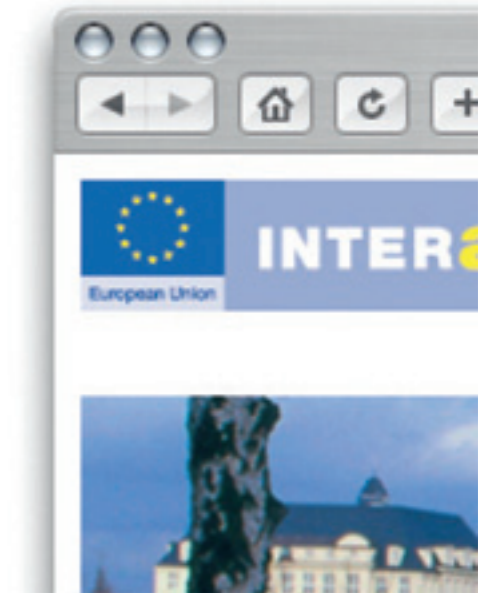
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We have launched our new website. Here we give you an insight into how it looks, and discuss some of the exciting features on offer.

moving in the right direction

Welcome to the INTERACT newsletter.



By **Paul Cozzi**,
Head of the INTERACT Secretariat
in Bratislava

The INTERACT Programme has undergone something of a rebirth this year, and we really feel that this is a fresh start for all of us. You, as programmes, projects, the European Territorial Cooperation community and further afield have told us what you like, what you don't like, what you need and what you want. We, in turn, have listened, have learnt, and now intend to respond in a way that is geared towards you, our stakeholders.

This newsletter is a great example of what we are trying to do, adopting many ideas from INTERACT I but also seeking to expand and enhance what we have, to deal with new environments and new challenges. This constitutes part of a wider communications strategy which will include extensive dissemination, regular newflashes, events across Europe, and of course our recently re-launched website.

Naturally this would not be possible without the four INTERACT Points in Turku, Valencia, Viborg and Vienna, whose new regional focus allows them to target stakeholders more efficiently and effectively than was possible in the previous programming period. Their seminars, training and advisory services are hugely popular - with over 40 events successfully run already this year. The needs analyses which each of the Points carried out in 2008 have underlined the importance of the learning cycle that INTERACT has come to epitomise.

Yet these are not the only areas in which we are making great strides. Our new Quality Assurance and Knowledge Manager, Saverio Liguori, is at the head of a team developing an innovative new knowledge management tool - KEEP - which will for the first time provide a comprehensive web portal containing information on all INTERREG III and Territorial Cooperation projects and much more.

This new tool, along with our communications strategy, complement what INTERACT II is all about: being able to effectively develop and communicate data on Territorial Cooperation in order to assist in evidence-based decision making as well as clearly and conclusively demonstrate the added value of cooperation. Our goal is to support good governance by getting reliable information to as many people as possible, and this newsletter is an integral part of that.

Happy reading,

Paul Cozzi



the new managing authority



By **Danusa Stromsikova**,
Head of the INTERACT Managing Authority
in Bratislava

It is with great pleasure that I am able to introduce the new INTERACT Managing Authority to you in this new INTERACT Newsletter. The Bratislava Self-Governing Region was delighted to have the opportunity to take on the role of Managing Authority in June of this year.

I look forward to working with the INTERACT team in providing support to European Territorial Cooperation by facilitating the sharing of expertise and good governance across Europe.

I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter as much as I have and that it may prove useful to you in your work.

Danusa Stromsikova

interact supports the european commission towards successful programme closure

The European Commission and INTERACT recently ran a series of consultation days on programme closure for INTERREG III.



By Elise Blais

Building on the success and main outcomes of the Closure events that took place in Vienna in October 2007 and in Brussels in April 2008, INTERACT and the European Territorial Cooperation Unit at DG Regional Policy organised a series of five consultation days on closure of INTERREG III programmes 2000-2006. These events took place in Copenhagen, Rome, Thessaloniki, Budapest and Madrid, and benefitted from the strong support and involvement of key stakeholders, including the participation of Mr Palma Andres, Director responsible for Territorial Cooperation at DG Regional Policy of the European Commission (read more from Mr Andres on page 10).

Strong participation

These consultation days were targeted at the key programme authorities of all INTERREG III programmes, with the objective of providing programmes with an opportunity to discuss their current financial situation and the

implications this may have for closure. In total, more than 220 programme representatives from 70 programmes participated in these events.

Key inputs from the European Commission

Ms Danielle Roelants, the European Commission's financial expert who will be working most closely with processing INTERREG III programme final claims and calculating the final payments, presented an outline of the closure process, indicating the calculation methods to be used by the European Commission and how to fill in the closure templates. Additionally, Ms Roelants provided a detailed simulation of the closure exercise for each participating programme, based on real data.

This provided programmes with the necessary tools to identify possible risks in their own programme, and to discuss possible solutions in order to ensure a smooth

closure. In particular, attention was drawn to different types of risks which remain problematic and where corrections may be necessary. These include the risk of private capping in the payment of the final balance, and that of the capping of payments based on the effective co-financing rate (if higher than the co-financing rate

indicated in the final financial plan of the programme). In addition, more than 20 programme desk officers from DG Regional Policy, as well as European Commission auditors participated in these different events and provided participants with inputs and answers.

Follow-up actions

- *Financial simulation:* A financial simulation for your programme can be requested by sending an e-mail to: Regio-territorial-cooperation@ec.europa.eu clearly indicating the name and CCI number of the programme.
- *Question and Answers:* Questions about closure can be submitted to DG Regional Policy by e-mail: Regio-sf-closure@ec.europa.eu This address will only become active when the first set of answers is published.
- The register of questions and answers prepared by DG Regional Policy will be available at the following link: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/closure/qa_en.htm

meeting the challenge head on

Closure can be a particularly challenging and intense period for many programmes, due to the need for stringent financial checks and looming deadlines. Yet, as Moray Gilland argues, it doesn't have to be so difficult, and in fact there are many reasons to be optimistic about the closure of INTERREG III.

Interview by Matt Nichols and Richard Grieveson

We cornered Moray Gilland from the Commission during a short lunch break between meetings at the recent Open Days in Brussels, at an outdoor cafe on a breezy street corner.

The morning had been spent locked in discussions at the INTERACT workshop chaired by Colin Wolfe, where Moray, Paul Cozzi, the Head of the INTERACT Secretariat, and Matt had spoken. After a lively exchange of ideas on the future of the programmes, including audience suggestions for future INTERREG communications strategies, Moray was keen to enjoy a quiet mushroom omelette and discuss the merits of being a Scotland fan.

However, inspired by his admission that morning of being a "cooperation junkie", and armed with a camera and a list of questions, we were able to stave off the discussion of football until we had picked his brains about the pressing issue of programme closure.

We began by asking him what messages he would send out to programmes about closure at this point. "The Commission does not underestimate the challenges of closing the programmes", he stressed. "There is a lot to do and a lot of loose ends that need to be tied up, but we should not forget that we have some advantages over the mainstream programmes.

"All of the INTERREG programmes are monofund, we have no major problems, or none that the Commission has been informed about anyway, and we are unlikely

to have many 'incomplete projects' in the sense of the closure guidelines. For most INTERREG programmes closure should just be the final stage of business as usual."

So what went wrong in INTERREG II then? Why the big delays in closing some programmes? "In many cases, amazingly basic stuff. The numbers had been added up wrong and we got different numbers in different documents.

"When you say that to programmes, people normally give you one of those 'We would never do that' looks, but given the number of documents with this kind of error, the chances are that they did! Check, check and check again because if you submit documents with this kind of basic error, you can be sure things will be delayed.

"And in general, it is not a very positive comment on your programme's accounting system if you cannot provide one correct figure on how much you have spent!"

What about other tips and ideas? Anything else to keep in mind during the closure phase? "Coherence between national answers", he immediately replies. "Member States have to work together on this and agree on their conclusions for the whole programme. And timing. If you have not started now, you are already too late. If that's you reading this newsletter, put it down and start calling people about how the programme is going to organise this." There are some who would complain, though, that the content side of the programmes seems to be forgotten

"Be flexible. As soon as it is obvious that plan A is not going to work, have a good plan B ready."

Moray Gilland



during closure. "Absolutely not true", Moray insists. "We focus on the rules because that is where most things can go wrong, but that does not mean that we are not very interested in finding out what the programmes have achieved. Let's be totally clear: the question of whether cooperation programmes deliver and what they deliver is central at the moment. We need clear, convincing messages about which problems projects are addressing, why they are using cooperation to do it, and what results they have achieved.

"We have all heard the same criticisms levelled at INTERREG - that it is all about networks with no real results, that benefits disappear at the end of the funding period, and that we do not really need cooperation to do a lot of this work. The final report should be seen as the best opportunity to take on those critics and spell out in convincing terms why the programme has been a success."

Our lunch finally arrives and we tuck in, but there is still time to ask Moray for any final thoughts on programme closure. He grins - "I like the new INTERACT knowledge management idea. I know this has not been announced to all programmes yet but any initiative that tries to build up a European picture of cooperation achievements has to be welcomed.

"People have been talking about this sort of thing for years but it is time to make it happen now and I hope programmes will contribute enthusiastically.

Communication and result sharing between programmes remain two of our biggest challenges and this sort of activity is one of the best ways to make sure that the closure of an INTERREG programme does not automatically mean the end of its achievements."

For the rest of the meal conversation turns to football and the chances of Scotland qualifying for the next major tournament. Moray is heading to his team's important World Cup qualifier in Glasgow against Norway at the weekend, yet after recent inconsistent performances admits to having no idea what to expect. He has no such concerns regarding programme closure however, and his closing words of advice are spelt out in clear terms: "Do your best to plan and say what is needed from the start. When you have a problem communicate it and agree a deadline for fixing it."

As he opens the door of a colleague's waiting car - just arranged over the phone to whisk him off to the next meeting - he leaves us with a final thought. "Be flexible. As soon as it is obvious that plan A is not going to work, have a good plan B ready."

Matt Nichols is Coordinator at INTERACT Point Viborg, and Richard Grieveson is Information Officer at the INTERACT Programme Secretariat

time to think seriously

31 December 2008 is an important date for INTERREG III. Not only does the close of the year signal the end of the eligibility period for the old programmes, it is also the last date by which all changes to programme measures must be completed. Therefore the last day of 2008 marks the true start of the INTERREG III closure procedure, a process which will be incredibly important.



By Jose Palma Andres
Director of DG Regional Policy at
the European Commission

The end of the eligibility period

On the one hand, closure needs to run smoothly and quickly to avoid the delays experienced in some INTERREG II programmes. Significant problems during closure would be an unfortunate sign of management difficulties at a time when programmes need to be signalling the strength of their systems and procedures in the run up to the budget negotiations next year.

In addition, the completion of project sample audits offers a chance to correct problems in programmes where audits started late or results have been weak. An unqualified winding up declaration is an opportunity for all programmes to demonstrate the essential soundness of their systems, regardless of any difficulties experienced during implementation.

Changing amounts in programme measures

Just as importantly, 31 December 2008 is also the deadline for completing any changes to the amounts in each measure in the final, approved CIP. It is no longer possible to change totals and co-financing amounts for priorities, but changes in the amounts allocated to each mea-

sure or the co-financing split can help to avoid unnecessary capping during the calculation of the final payment to the programme.

"There is still a lot to be done, and missing the deadline is not an option."

Together with INTERACT, the Commission has organised a series of five closure consultation days specifically for INTERREG programmes in order to explain these procedures and ensure that any changes needed can be completed before the deadline. If your programme was not able to attend one of these events, please contact the Commission as soon as possible to discuss whether there are any potential problems and how they might be resolved.

The challenges of programme closure

As Moray Gilland points out elsewhere in this newsletter, however, there are several reasons why the closure of INTERREG should be simpler than the mainstream programmes. As ever, the true challenge - and the whole purpose of the programmes - is cooperation.

Programmes have to submit a single winding up declaration covering the whole programme area and this will need close work between authorities in all of the participating countries. As a result, it is important that INTERREG programmes are prioritised and action starts quickly so there is room in closure timetables for the necessary coordination.

It is expected that Second Level Control work in the programmes should almost have been completed by now. Where this is not the case, the responsible authorities must set aside the resources to complete this work early in 2009 because there can be no true start on closure without the final results of the sample checks. Similarly, where a separate winding up body has been appointed, it should already be involved in the programme, and in monitoring the results of the audits, so that there is a good awareness of the status of the programme before the formal winding up procedure begins.

Another issue to be urgently addressed by programme and national authorities is unresolved irregularity cases and recoveries. It is not reasonable that the whole closure procedure should be delayed by a small number of open cases, and therefore programmes should agree strict timelines for resolving all open issues. Again, this points to the vital importance of completing all programme audit work as soon as possible.

Programme final reports

Yet in our desire to ensure that the technical aspects of closure are completed correctly and on time, it is important that we do not forget the content side. A programme's final report offers the best opportunity to provide a preliminary assessment of what the programme has really achieved.

What contributions have the projects made to the programme's priorities? Where is there evidence of progress in the programme area, and what still remains to be done? Perhaps most importantly, what have INTERREG funding and cooperation made possible in the participating regions that would otherwise not have been possible?

Just as much as demonstrating sound management, providing a convincing assessment of the value of INTERREG will be an incredibly important factor in discussions on the future of European Territorial Cooperation.

Submission of closure documents

The deadline for submission of final closure documents to the Commission is 31 March 2010. While this gives us almost one and a half years, there is still a lot to be done, and missing the deadline is not an option. Programmes that do so will simply be closed on the basis of the latest documents available to the Commission.

The Commission is here to support the closure process, and naturally the desk officers and staff in the other units are available to provide advice and assistance wherever possible. A wide range of written material is also available from a number of sources, including the INTERACT website. However, at the risk of repeating ourselves, programmes need to start soon in order to identify the real problems, so that support can be provided in time.

I would therefore urge all programmes to start giving serious attention to closure now in order to ensure that procedures and deadlines are in place by the end of the year. To return to my first point, we need to get this right. Many eyes will be watching the end of INTERREG III before deciding their final position on INTERREG V.

Read more

- *Regional Policy - Inforegio, the Commission's Regional Policy website:*
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index_en.htm
- *Directorate General for Regional Policy:*
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/regional_policy/index_en.htm
- *Programme Closure Section on the INTERACT website:*
http://www.interact-eu.net/programme_closure/61
- *Towards a Successful Closure of Structural Funds 2000-2006 Programmes, European Commission Seminar for Managing and Paying Authorities and Winding-up Bodies:*
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/closure/programme_en.htm

programme closure

Q & A

INTERACT recently ran a series of seminars with the European Commission on the theme of programme closure. Participants were invited to ask questions, and a sample of those which were most relevant, along with the answers given, are provided below.

By Guillaume Terrien

What changes are possible before the end of the year?

You can change the total funding available in different measures and the ERDF rate for those measures - as long as the totals for the priority are unchanged. So if you increase the funding in one measure, you will have to reduce it in another measure. These types of changes can prevent capping of the final payment.

It is also possible to withdraw projects from the programme if there are problems that cannot be resolved. This will require a full recovery of funds from the project but will mean that the rest of the closure procedure can go ahead.

You can also change project contracts - and indeed you must if any other changes will have an impact on the project level.

Are there any additional requirements?

If the programme has not already checked with the European Commission it would be extremely wise to do so before changing the financial tables. All changes have to be approved by the Monitoring Committee no later than 31 December 2008, and the modified Programme Complement must be submitted to the Commission no later than 31 January 2009.

What is partial closure?

Partial closure is something new for the 2000-2006 period. In the past, the European Commission closed a programme even if there were still open irregularities and then recovered money after closure when necessary. Many of these INTERREG II recoveries are still ongoing and in order to avoid a repeat of this situation, the Commission is introducing partial closure.

Programmes can decide whether to go for full or partial closure. If they decide on full closure, all irregularities must be resolved, whilst it is necessary to withdraw any unresolved cases from the programme. In other words, all of the expenditure included must be correct.

With partial closure, programmes do not need to remove unresolved cases, but the expenditure covered by these cases will not be closed. It will remain open and unpaid until there is a final decision on the case concerned. There is an advantage here as Member States will only be able to ask the European Commission to bear the costs for irrecoverable amounts if they have gone for partial closure and done everything possible to resolve the case themselves.

Are there any deadlines here?

Yes. Four years for administrative procedures and eight years for judicial procedures.

We've had a change in irregularity rules during the 2000-2006 period. In the past all irregularities over EUR 4 000 had to be reported but in 2006 the amount changed to EUR 10 000. How will this be treated?

If the programme only has open irregularities of between EUR 4 000 and EUR 10 000 (regardless of when they occurred) it can go for full closure, although the programme and Member States should of course continue to try and recover the funds involved. If the programme has other, larger open cases, it will have to go for partial closure but the Commission guarantees amounts between EUR 4 000 and EUR 10 000 if these prove to be irrecoverable.

Are there any special requirements for the final report?

Guidance is currently being prepared by the European Commission. It is also worth noting that the European Commission recommends submitting a separate activity report for 2008 if the programme has any doubts about whether it will be able to submit satisfactory closure documents on time (normally the 2008 report is part of the final report).



The programme can then be closed on the basis of the 2008 report. There is no deadline for submitting a separate report as long as it reaches the European Commission before the closure documents. Similarly, Paying Authorities should continue to submit interim claims to the European Commission even after they have claimed 95% of programme funds and know they will not be paid until closure.

Should all payments be made by the Paying Authority by 31 December 2008?

No. The Paying Authority will continue to make payments after 2008 - and should continue to submit interim claims to the European Commission even after 95% of programme funds have been paid.

Programme staff (only) can request the financial simulation for their programme by sending an e-mail to: Regio-territorial-cooperation@ec.europa.eu clearly indicating the name and CCI number of the programme.

preparing for closure: experiences gained and lessons learned

Programme closure often appears to be a daunting and complicated task. The general objective of any Member State should be the successful closure of a programme, yet how can we really define this? Is it enough if all closure documents have been submitted to the European Commission before the deadline of 31 March 2010? Or is the full absorption of the available funds the real benchmark for success?

By Susanna Rafalzik



Background

As a basic principle, a programme is closed when the European Commission has paid the final balance, yet to achieve this several important requirements have to be met.

The declaration of closure, the so-called winding-up declaration, which should be free of limitation, is only one of the important requirements. To achieve this winding-up declaration it is essential that all irregularities are "treated" satisfactorily, and that there are no open audit findings or detected systemic weaknesses which have not been appropriately dealt with.

Another very important requirement is the assurance of data-consistency. This means that all documents should refer to the same correct and final figures - not only on the programme level, but also on the measure and the project level.

Only if these main conditions are met, and the documents are sent to the European Commission, can the closure procedure at the European level start. The European Commission cannot pay out the final balance in full until this procedure has been carried out successfully.

Programmes need to remember that, starting from the date of the payment of the final balance by the European Commission, the document retention period of 3 years for projects and administration begins. A programme is only successfully and finally closed when this period is over.

Closure documents

Each single programme has to provide all closure documents, and therefore if a Managing Authority is responsible for several programmes, it needs to produce several sets of documents.

The first necessary document is the final report on implementation, under the responsibility of the programme Managing Authority. This must be accompanied by the projects list including each single operation, which is usually the outcome of a well-functioning Monitoring System, managed by the Managing and Paying Authorities. Additionally, a summary table of unfinished and non-operational projects, as well as suspended projects as a result of judicial or administrative proceedings, must be attached to the final report.

The second document is the claim for final payment and the last declaration of expenditure, submitted by the Paying Authority. The final documents are the winding-up declaration and the final Financial Control report, which must be compiled by the winding-up body. A summary table of irregularities communicated to the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) must be attached to the winding-up declaration.

The general challenges of closure in all structural funds programs

A programme preparing itself for closure will have to face several challenges.

Firstly, projects have to be closed and finalised in order to be included in the documents. Keeping the deadlines is essential, and therefore preparation of all documents has to be completed in good time, to allow the winding-up body to examine all relevant documents, provide feedback, and receive corrected documents if required.

A major problem and challenge faced by programmes is data consistency in its documents. To comply with the

given deadlines, the finalisation of the audit work for each programme, including the follow-up actions, has to be finished before the winding-up activities start. All irregularities have to be reported, which also means that all open reimbursements must be included. Programmes have to cope with a very narrow timeframe and should therefore have already begun to prepare for closure at the end of 2007.

The additional challenges in closing INTERREG programmes

Even though INTERREG programmes involve different authorities from different participating countries, the European Commission still expects one single closure procedure and not different ones for each Member State. Accordingly, the Managing Authority of the programme and the National Authorities involved have to co-operate closely and share all necessary information.

If in an INTERREG programme the responsible Paying Authority is supported by a sub-paying authority on the other side of the border, the two also have to co-operate very closely. In a similar way, the winding-up body and the national audit authority in all countries involved, have to work in parallel and in close co-operation to finalise the winding-up declaration and the final Financial Control report. Only the joint efforts of all involved parties can help the closure turning into a 'mission impossible'.

Lessons learned

Each Member States participating in the programme remains responsible for its share of the programme and has to contribute to a successful closure. The Member State therefore has to provide the necessary information and documents on time. It is crucial that all bodies bear in mind that without the winding-up declaration and all necessary closure documents, no final payment from the Commission will be issued.

In the case of a programme missing its deadline, automatic de-commitment will be applied for the open amounts, which means that the programme will lose part of its financial allocation. In order to avoid this, the process of programme closure has to start as soon as possible. A good way for INTERREG programmes to prepare for programme closure in good time is through an agreed joint timetable (for an example of some Austrian programmes see "Read more").

Monitoring of irregularities

Based on the practice of previous closure procedures, we recommend keeping a consistent and regularly updated list of all reported irregularities, and a consistent overview of the follow-ups of reported irregularities. This should also include those irregularities below the threshold and therefore not reported to OLAF. Nevertheless, the amounts affected by these irregularities should be corrected in the final declaration of expenditure.

It must not be forgotten that the Member States are obliged to submit copies of irregularity reports to the MA, the PA and the winding-up body according to reg. (EC) 1681/94, last modified by reg. (EC) 2035/2005. Moreover, if there have been financial corrections for errors, both single case or systemic errors, the follow-up should be consistently recorded in the data storage systems of all bodies involved, including the Managing Authority, the National Authority the national Audit Authorities of the participating countries, the Paying Authority and Sub- Paying Authority (if any), and the winding-up body.

Monitoring of audit results

At the same time, the programme data system, or systems should include and file all results of the different national and European audits. In the case of different data systems being used, data coherency shall be ensured for each single piece of information.

Data coherency means, in particular, that even the information coming from different systems should refer to one programme, and therefore may not differ.

Content of the Winding-up Declaration and the Final Financial Control Report

A template of the winding-up declaration is available in regulation (EC) 438/2001, annex III. The structure for the final Financial Control Report is provided in the closure guidelines of the European Commission.

This declaration should also include a list of all reported irregularities and their follow-ups, as well as a summary of the audits reports, such as the article 10 audits and the final audit report, including national and European audits carried out for the programme. This should cover all audit results and the financial corrections made, as

well as the calculation of the percentage of audited expenditure, not below the required 5% threshold. The effects of these audits also have to be taken into account for the final declaration of expenditure.

Who submits the final documents?

According to Commission Regulation (EC) No 438/2001 of 2 March 2001, laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999, the Member State responsible for the programme submits the winding-up declaration together with the requested

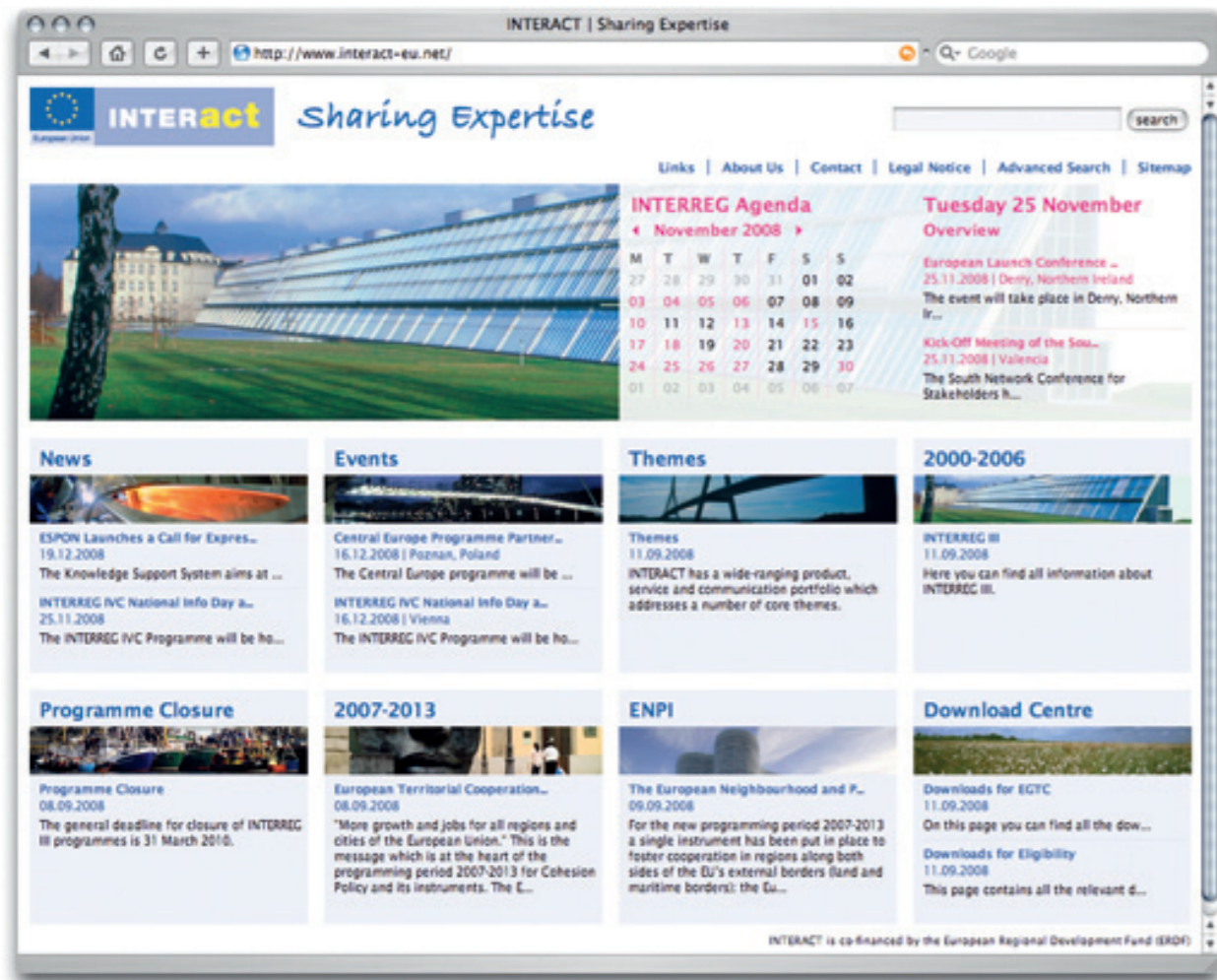
reports, lists and statements. As the responsible winding-up body has to certify that all information in the final report, as well as in the final declaration of expenditure and payment claim, is correct and consistent, it could be a recommendation of best practice that the winding-up body submits the whole package at the same time on behalf of the Member State.

Susanna Rafalzik is the Director of ERDF Audit Department in the Austrian Federal Chancellery, and Head of Audit Authority for ERDF in Austria, Bundeskanzleramt, Abteilung IV/3, Ballhausplatz 2, 1014 Wien

Read More

- *EC Guidance on Programme Closure:*
http://www.interact-eu.net/programme_closure_ecguidance/73
- *Downloads relating to programme closure:*
http://www.interact-eu.net/programme_closure_downloads/74
- *Example of some Austrian programmes:*
http://www.interact-eu.net/programme_closure_downloads/programme_closure_downloads/74/126





the new interact website

We are delighted to be able to announce the launch of our new website. It's packed full of the latest news from the European Territorial Cooperation community and detailed coverage of INTERACT's products and services, as well as an extensive downloads section. Of course, it also has a section dedicated to programme closure.

The new homepage features an "INTERREG Agenda" which provides an overview of what's going on in Territorial Cooperation. If you have something to add to the calendar or a news item, please tell us by using the new event and news announcement forms.

The new themes section is a dedicated area on key topics addressed by INTERACT, including programme

management, financial management and EGTC. Finding the files or information that you want has never been easier. Each thematic section can be browsed by news, sub-themes, regulatory framework, events, downloads and EC guidance allowing you to access exactly what you need effortlessly.

From December you will be able to personalise your own space on the website, allowing you to register for events with ease as well as comment on pages and bookmark your favourite areas and documents.

So come and see for yourself what the INTERACT website has to offer, at www.interact-eu.net



interact works

Claudia Valle
Project Manager,
INTERREG IVA Italy-Austria Programme

"From the beginning the Regional Network set up by INTERACT Point Vienna was a win-win situation for all Cross-border programmes taking part in the network. On the one side the representatives of the programmes communicated to INTERACT, after a joint discussion, their effective needs in terms of learning events, expertise, documents and dialogue with other programmes. On the other side INTERACT has developed a realistic work plan for the next few years, which meets the programmes' needs."

"IP Vienna is ready to offer standard and ad-hoc services to each programme that needs them. This approach contributes to improving the management of the programmes and has a positive impact on the thousands of Cross-border projects co-financed by them. Furthermore, the annual meeting, which took place in Vienna at the end of September, provided an opportunity to look at the bigger picture of European Territorial Cooperation, thanks to presentations from the European Commission and other innovative European initiatives, such as Jaspers."

upcoming interact events

- 1 December Article 71 Online Advice from the European Commission
- 4 December Financial Management in Territorial Cooperation Projects Seminar Amsterdam
- 11 December Joint Challenges Conference Helsinki

For more information please see the events section of the INTERACT website at www.interact-eu.net/events/14

request a topic:

At INTERACT one of our stated aims is to be responsive to the needs of our stakeholders. Therefore if you would like to request a topic for our future newsletters, please e-mail Richard Grieveson at richard.grieveson@interact-eu.net